



WABASH RIVER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

REPRESENTING KNOX, SULLIVAN, VIGO, PARKE AND VERMILLION COUNTIES

WABASH RIVER REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Wabash River Regional Development Authority (RDA) was established in 2015 in response to the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative. The Regional Cities Initiative has helped communities across Indiana come together to transform their regions into nationally-recognized destinations to live, work and play. With employers continually stressing the need for a large, skilled workforce, Indiana is building upon its strong economic foundation to create a quality of place that attracts and retains future generations of Hoosiers.

In an effort to improve the quality of life in the three county region of Knox, Sullivan and Vigo counties, the Wabash River Regional Development Authority worked with local officials and community groups to create a Regional Development Plan to attract businesses, retain talent and improve tourism to the historic Wabash Riverfront.

The Wabash River region is at the forefront of unprecedented progress and change with great community leaders and organizations coming together for a common vision – to enhance the quality of life in Indiana’s historic riverfront communities.

Improved affordable housing, more sidewalks and bike trails, better parks, an appealing downtown and a revitalized riverfront create a more inviting place to call home. Many communities across the country have recognized the economic and social impact that can be gained by a riverfront community. Known as “game-changers” for communities, the riverfront can create a vital sense of place that significantly benefits the development of downtown areas, enhances the ability to attract businesses, creates a more desirable convention and visitor environment and provides a staging ground for hundreds of entertainment events enjoyed by visitors and residents.

Although the Wabash River Regional Development Authority did not receive funding through the initial Regional Cities program, the process was very beneficial as it raised the profile of a number of projects in the area and created many synergies that have spurred collaboration in the region. Public and private partnerships have worked strategically to secure funding and make significant progress on several projects. The following is a summary of projects that have been completed and those that are underway to spur economic development through waterfront revitalization.

2015-2019 COMPLETED PROJECTS

TOTAL INVESTMENTS: \$63 MILLION



**KIMMELL PARK & WABASH RIVERFRONT
REVITALIZATION**
INVESTMENT: \$3,800,000



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTER
INVESTMENT: \$4,500,000



**VINCENNES UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SCIENCE,
ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS**
INVESTMENT: \$25,000,000



OLD CHICAGO PIZZA & TAPROOM
(FORMALLY NEW MOON THEATRE ON MAIN STREET)
INVESTMENT: \$2,500,000



RIVERFRONT LOFTS
(FORMALLY THE ICON BUILDING)
INVESTMENT: \$23,000,000



**INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY GIBSON TRACK &
FIELD COMPLEX**
INVESTMENT: \$4,300,000

2020 AND MOVING FORWARD

2020 Board Members

Chair: Linda Waldroup, Vice President of Financial Services, Vincennes University

Vice-Chair: Gregory Goode, Executive Director of Government Relations and University Communications, Indiana State University

Secretary: James Exline, Executive Vice President, Wabash Capital

Board Member: Robert Baesler, Owner Baesler's Market

Board Member: Nichole Like, Executive Director, Pantheon Business Theatre

2020 Meeting Dates

January 10, 2020; February 28, 2020; June 19, 2020; August 6, 2020; August 14, 2020; & December 8, 2020

Vision Statement

"The Wabash River Region is comprised of collaborative, diverse partners who are working to shape a region of prosperous communities, quality talent from our educational institutions, thriving industry and small business, and excellent infrastructure to support growth."

With many of the projects identified in the first Regional Development Plan well on their way to completion, the Wabash River Regional Development Authority submitted an updated Regional Development Plan in September 2018 to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to carry on the momentum along the Wabash River and improve economic and workforce development for the region.

The plan was approved by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the Wabash River RDA received a \$1.5 million Business & Innovation Fund grant in March 2019 to support the projects outlined in the plan. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 year was a very successful period for the RDA. Planning discussions, community meetings, design development, bidding processes, and construction are all underway on many projects. Additionally, board members embraced the IEDC's population goal for Regional Development Authorities by expanding to a five county region that now includes Knox, Sullivan, Vigo, Parke and Vermillion counties and represents nearly 200,000 Indiana residents. Regionalism is a winning strategy for promoting strong and lasting economic growth.

It is an exciting time for the region as we start to see many of the projects included in the Regional Development Plan brought to fruition. The French Quarter housing development is open for occupancy and has been a tremendous improvement to the landscape of Vincennes. The Pantheon Business and Innovation Theatre held its Grand Opening in November and began co-working activities in December. Renovations to Grouseland have begun and Art Spaces is continuing with implementation of Phase I of Turn to the River. What was once a clear lack of connectivity between communities and the riverfront is quickly becoming a vibrant region as it capitalizes on its historical and educational assets and the invaluable riverfront opportunities.

While nearly \$50 million in projects were included in the 2018 Wabash River Regional Development Plan, only \$1.5 million was awarded. The Wabash River RDA remains dedicated to ensuring that this limited funding is used in a way that, combined with additional funding sources, makes the biggest impact for our region.

SUMMARY OF FUNDED PROJECTS

Pantheon Business & Innovation Theatre: \$250,000

(an additional \$250,000 was granted to this project from IEDC)

William Henry Harrison Presidential Visitors Center: \$250,000

Grouseland Renovation: \$150,000

Sullivan Splash Park: \$100,000

Turn to the River: \$700,000

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL MANSION & VISITORS CENTER PROJECT COST: \$11.5 MILLION

Many organizations including Vincennes University and the Grouseland Foundation have worked together to strengthen this project in efforts to secure the funding needed to bring it to fruition. Governor Holcomb cited the project as “one of the most historically significant projects our state has had the opportunity to bring to life.”

Funds raised through the Grouseland Foundation’s Living Legacy campaign were used to obtain a 2:1 matching grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation. The campaign raised \$1,200,000 for the restoration of the William Henry Harrison Presidential Mansion. The Wabash River RDA believes matching grants are a great way to maximize our funds and therefore allocated \$150,000 to the campaign.



The Living Legacy Campaign progressed into Vision 2020 and great care was taken to select a specialized and qualified company to conduct the restoration work at Grouseland. The Durable Restoration Company was selected as the contractor because of their experience with other historical sites and their expertise in preservation and restoration. The scope of the project includes: restoration of the front portico, tuckpointing, roof work, restoration and replacement of all windows and interior restoration of Harrison’s Dining Room and Council Chamber. These rooms are most significant to Harrison’s establishment of the Indiana Territorial Government because it is here that Native American leaders discussed land cessation and signed treaties. The Dining Room also hosted notable guests such as Lewis and Clark, Aaron Burr, and Zachary Taylor. Currently, all wallpaper and trim has been removed and original fireplaces have been exposed for restoration. The extensive measuring and fabricating process has begun on the windows and the roof and gutter system has been repaired. Additional research and paint analysis has been ongoing through the process.

When completed, the Vision 2020 will become the Vision Revealed in 2021 and Grouseland will once again share why this home is not only important to Indiana but also to our nation. With the majority of the work in progress, project completion is anticipated by June 30, 2021.





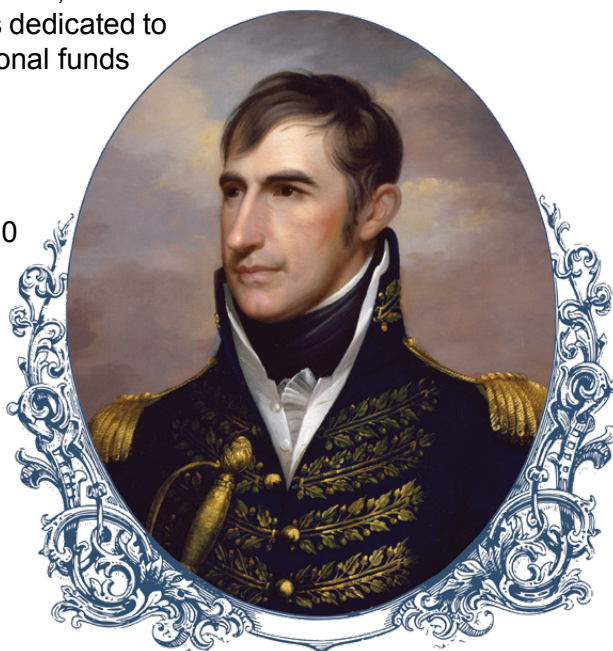
While funding for the restoration of the William Henry Harrison Presidential Mansion has been secured, community leaders continue to seek funding for the construction of the William Henry Harrison Presidential Visitors Center. Understanding that historic venues have the ability to draw visitors from all across the country and are an important part of tourism and economic development, the Wabash River RDA allocated \$250,000 to the project. The RDA remains dedicated to helping bring this project to life and will continue to seek additional funds in support of the project.

Project Information

Located adjacent to the Presidential Mansion, the new 15,000 square foot Harrison Presidential Visitors Center will welcome visitors to explore the history of the local surroundings and gain an understanding of the historical importance of the State of Indiana. The Harrison Presidential Visitors Center will act as a historic hub that will gather students, visitors, and community alike to explore the history of Vincennes and Indiana.

Features of Harrison Presidential Visitors Center

- A museum and theatre room, featuring films illustrating Harrison's contributions to Indiana and the United States
- Display areas of items from Harrison's home and his life
- A classroom/meeting room for community and educational events
- Chapter office for the Daughters of the American Revolution that will provide space for them to continue their important work of education, patriotism and historic preservation
- Harrison Presidential Mansion Office
- A gift shop and public restrooms



FRENCH QUARTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT COST: \$25 MILLION



The French Quarter housing development underwent significant construction in 2020. Phase I which includes 30 apartment units with 92 total bedrooms was completed and opened for occupancy in August 2020. Property amenities include bike storage, second-floor balconies, a parking space for each bedroom, a fountain, and open outdoor space. Additionally, Vincennes University is halfway through the construction of Phase 2 which will open in August 2021 with an additional 89 bedrooms.

This project has transformed a dilapidated area of the city into a vibrant community asset. More than just housing, the development has created a pedestrian-active environment that provides a strong connection for foot traffic between downtown, First Street, the Harrison Presidential Mansion, Vincennes University and the riverfront. This project brings together what Vincennes University is proud to represent - community revitalization, economic development, and student recruitment.



RIVERVIEW LOFTS

PROJECT COST: \$9 MILLION



Following many months of seeking approvals from state authorities, the Riverview Lofts on the banks of the Wabash River in Vincennes and construction of 22 income-based, single family homes throughout Vincennes began construction in 2020. Located on the site of the former grain elevators,



this affordable housing development not only provides an essential housing option for the community, but has also made a significant impact on the landscape of the Wabash Riverfront.



Both housing projects were funded with federal tax credits and the city's Redevelopment Commission funded the demolition of the grain silos. The three-story, riverfront affordable housing complex features 22 income based, 1-bedroom units and 10 market-rate units on its top floor as well as commercial space on the first floor. The Riverview Lofts is now pre-leasing its single-family homes located throughout the city.

PANTHEON: A BUSINESS & INNOVATION THEATER

The Wabash River RDA contributed \$250,000 to this project. Additionally, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation provided an additional \$250,000 matching grant.

The Pantheon is a regional coworking space and business incubator whose mission is to create resources, services, and an environment that fosters innovation and helps entrepreneurs start and grow prosperous businesses in Knox County. The Pantheon moved forward with construction, program development, marketing, and fundraising in 2020 and opened its doors in December 2020.

Leaders continue to build the partnership between the Pantheon and Purdue University. Dr. Sangtae Kim, Head of Purdue University's School of Chemical Engineering (CHE), has secured a \$2 million-dollar endowment through CHE to support various programming and research efforts at the Pantheon. The endowment income will be used to pay for certain CHE activities, such as the Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR), engineering co-ops, and faculty-driven research projects. Purdue University shares in the bold vision of the Pantheon as a regional hub of entrepreneurial and technical innovation.



Along with Purdue CHE, the Pantheon partners with Purdue Foundry to collaborate on programming for the incubator. Leaders are also actively working with Dr. Jason Salstrom of the Foundry and WestGate at Crane to build a solid programming calendar for the Pantheon. FireStarter, the Foundry's program for entrepreneurs, is being offered at the Pantheon. Mark Need, professor of law at Indiana University and director of the university's Entrepreneurial Law Clinic, is now offering regular office hours at the Pantheon.



The Pantheon Ag Tech Committee continues its work. Drew Garretson leads this effort and connects Knox County to the ag innovation community in the State of Indiana and beyond. The Pantheon is a member of the Agrinovus Innovation Council, a statewide ag innovation think-tank that leads Indiana's economic development effort in the ag and bioscience sector. The Pantheon is forming connections and collaborating with partners to plug Knox County into the entrepreneurial and innovation networks that drive the 21st Century economy.

The Pantheon received notice of a \$732,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration for the complete exterior renovation of the building and technology within the building. Work on this project will begin in the spring of 2021, with anticipated completion by the beginning of 2022.

TURN TO THE RIVER

PROJECT COST: \$10.5 MILLION



Turn to the River is a multi-year project to reconnect Terre Haute's downtown with the Wabash River through public art and design. It is a collaborative quality of place initiative focused on: physical land improvements, green spaces, health and wellness, public sculpture, and enhancing connectivity and access between the Wabash River, downtown Terre Haute and the Indiana State University campus. The focus area includes the 4-square block government campus that encompasses Terre Haute City Hall and Vigo County Courthouse.

A designed walking promenade will lead people through this area and the city's parking lot to the river, where a city-owned property, "One Wabash," will be redesigned as a public green space with an overlook and a flexible performance structure for public events.

Turn to the River is comprised of three projects that, when completed, will come together to create a new riverfront destination.

1. Riverside Green Space and Overlook: \$5 million
2. Walking Promenade: \$3 million
3. Revitalization of the Government Campus: \$2.5 million

The Wabash River RDA has allocated \$700,000 for the implementation of these projects.

1. RIVERSIDE GREENSPACE & OVERLOOK

A city owned riverside property, "One Wabash" at the end of Wabash Avenue, offers a prime location to connect the city's downtown to the Wabash River. The project will include green space, public art and arts programming as well as a Wabash overlook that will offer a visual experience of the river.

While the overlook will be accomplished in a later phase of *Turn to the River*, there is added activity occurring locally and regionally that will increase local interest in accomplishing this phase. A new pedestrian/biking trail across the river from this site is underway and will be completed in 2021; a focus group of the Chamber of Commerce's Community Plan is working on refurbishing aspects of Fairbanks Park, which is one block south of the *Turn to the River* overlook site; and a trails committee is working on connecting Terre Haute's many trails with those of the contiguous counties. One of the connecting links-to-be runs nearly adjacent to the overlook site. These are all exciting community activities that indicate increased multi-sector interest in completing Terre Haute's riverfront reactivation and the important connecting link that *Turn to the River* offers between the urban and natural environments.





2. WALKING PROMENADE

A walking promenade will replace and widen the walkway from 3rd Street to the Wabash River. The walkway will give pedestrians the sense that they are approaching the river through its design, public art and placement of natural features.

The portion of the walking promenade adjacent to the county jail will be revisited for implementation in conjunction with the completion of the new jail construction on the south side of the city, which is estimated to occur in 2022-23. Site work between the current jail and Vigo County Courthouse will be accomplished after the inmate population has

been relocated; therefore it is likely that the walking promenade of *Turn to the River* will occur as the third or fourth phase and a timeline will be determined at a later time.

A portion of the walking promenade will traverse the parking lot, creating an island that will serve as a large event space. It will be designed to accommodate seating areas; electrical, water and other infrastructure to accommodate farmers markets, food trucks and festivals; bike racks; charging stations; and public art. The area will feature an interpretive sign, an educational aspect celebrating the various phases of Terre Haute's relationship to the Wabash River and underscoring its importance to the city, region and beyond. The intention is to move forward with design development of the event space in Fall 2021. Art Spaces has raised 50% of the amount needed for this project and is currently raising the remaining amount.



3. REVITALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT CAMPUS

The once sterile four-square block government campus which includes Terre Haute City Hall and the Vigo County Courthouse is the primary connecting area between the downtown and the Wabash River. Public art, event space, shaded seating, attractive wayfinding and amenities that integrate aspects of the city and county cultural history will animate the area. City Hall's parking lot will be utilized for public events such as the farmer's market, festivals and other community happenings.

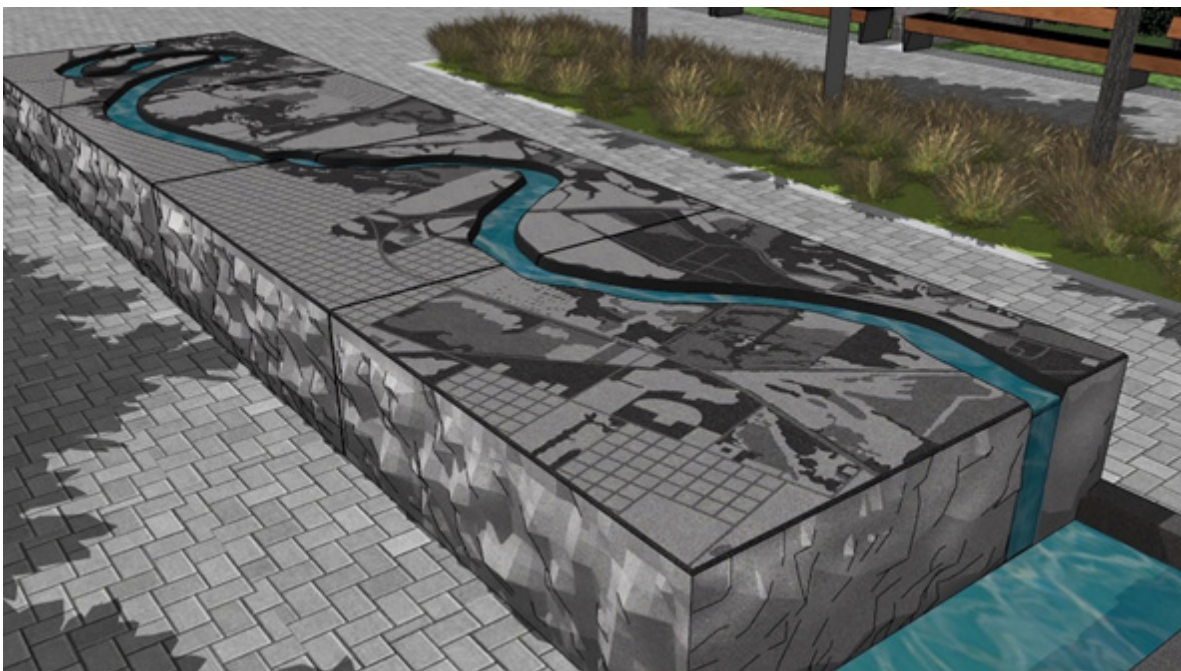
Shovels and hardhats are ready and ground will be broken on this first phase of *Turn to the River* in April 2021. The construction in the central city-county plaza is estimated to occur over a 60-day period following groundbreaking. Art Spaces is coordinating a timeline for demolition of the existing concrete surface and fountain; excavation; grading and drainage; and new infrastructure including water and electrical lines. All elements will be ready for foundations to be poured for the artwork by artist Brad Goldberg of Dallas, Texas. With the sculpture tentatively scheduled to arrive in late May 2021, Art Spaces is creating a timeline based around its estimated arrival date. Following the installation of the sculpture and fountain, Art Spaces will coordinate the site work to include new hardscape, new pathways, seating, power posts, electrical outlets,

lighting and landscaping. A portion of the landscaping may be done at a later time, but essential elements will be installed at this time.



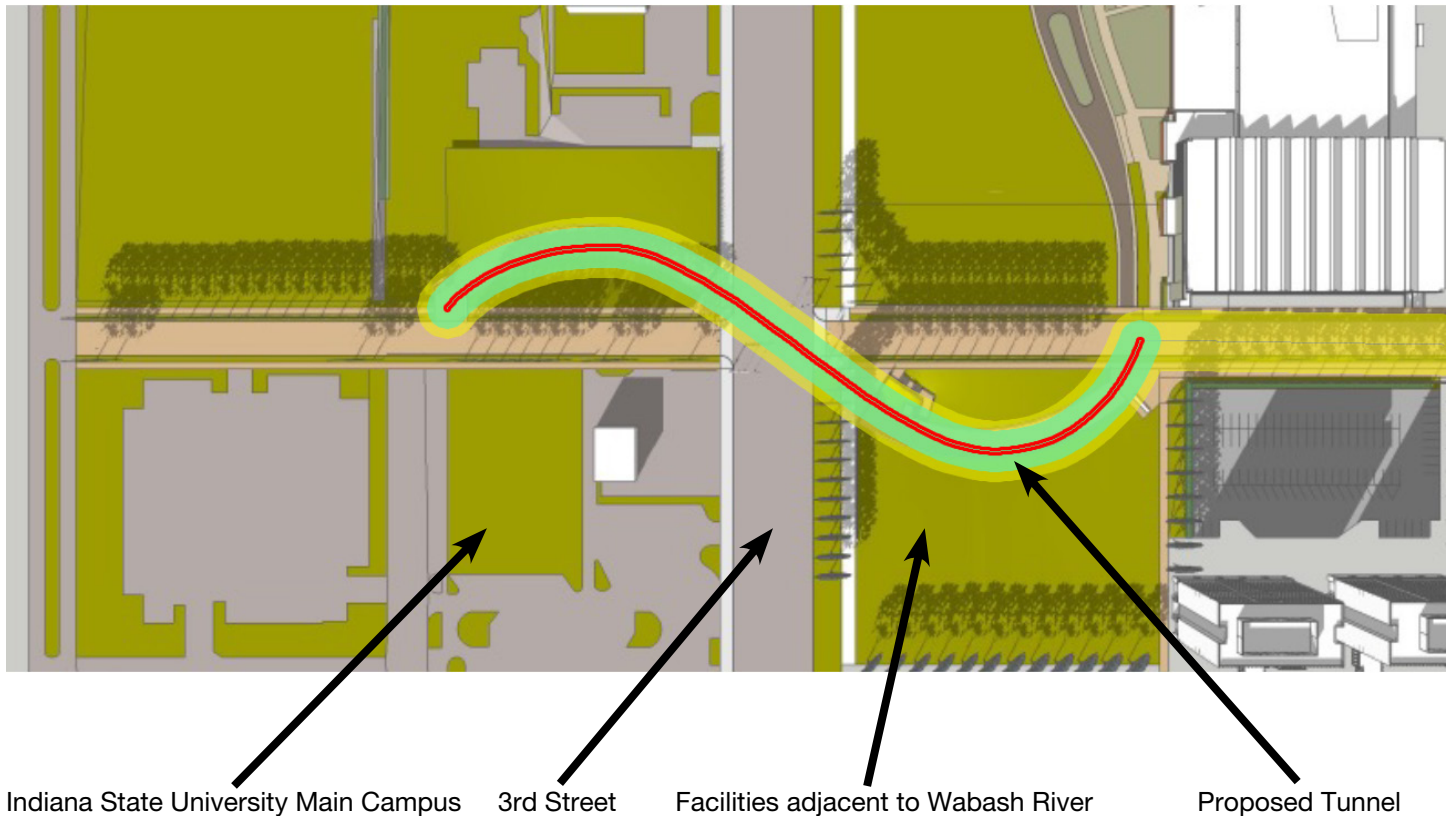
Taylor, Siefker Williams Design Group of Indianapolis has provided design and construction documents. The firm arcDESIGN of Indianapolis is working with Art Spaces to refine design elements for wayfinding throughout Turn to the River. Art Spaces has completed a draft of a first interpretive sign which is currently being reviewed by various entities for accuracy and relevance. Other wayfinding elements planned for this phase are a sign acknowledging our funders, artist identification near the sculpture, and city and county directionals.

Art Spaces' *Turn to the River* and Marketing Committees are currently drafting a Marketing Plan for the construction phase. *Turn to the River* is a community project built through ongoing community engagement. Public events held at the plaza area to gather input and generate excitement were highly successful. These public events were curtailed due to the pandemic. We have connected the public with *Turn to the River* over the past year through a video "Focus on Art Spaces," e-blasts, Facebook, and a large mailing. Art Spaces continues to engage the public in the construction phase through video and press, broadcast and social media.



The surface of the sculpture captures Terre Haute's proximity to the Wabash River, the form the river takes as it runs next to the city, and its amalgam of the urban environment on the east side, and natural environment to the west. In addition to making a strong visual statement, the sculpture will offer tactile qualities, providing an experience for people that are visually impaired.

CHESTNUT STREET PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL



As momentum is building with the increased development activity along the Wabash River, Indiana State University is exploring options with state and local partners that would provide safe pedestrian access across the six lane 3rd Street (US 41). A pedestrian tunnel connecting the area near the Wabash River with Indiana State University is being explored and the University conducted a feasibility study to assess the prospect of building the tunnel.

The anticipated location of the project is at the intersection of 3rd Street (US 41) and Chestnut Street. The need for this pedestrian pathway is clear as approximately 34,000 daily motorized vehicles use 3rd Street to travel north and south adjacent to the University. The University is working with consultants and partners for a more complete pricing estimate of the costs associated with the proposed Chestnut Street Pedestrian Tunnel. Indiana State University continues to quietly assess the feasibility of this project that would connect the University campus with key, quality of place projects already completed and envisioned along the Wabash River.

SULLIVAN SPLASH PARK

The Wabash River RDA has allocated \$100,000 for the implementation of this project.

The splash pad in Sullivan will be appropriately located in Central Plaza, a block of land in downtown Sullivan that houses the Sullivan Civic Center, a soon-to-be pavilion and hotel, and access to the city's continuously developing trail systems. As the city continues to build upon its vision of making the city an accommodating community to live, work, play and age, the splash pad will be a timeless attraction. The splash pad features will include fountains, jets, arches and towers for the community to enjoy.

The benefits of the splash pad are abundant and will be a place that can be enjoyed year-round. Although the fountains may only be turned on for five or six months, colorful arches and towers will provide an artistic essence, making them something to enjoy throughout all the seasons.

The City of Sullivan continues to move forward with engineering designs for the splash park. Most recently, the City has worked with private donors who have pledged an additional \$250,000 to the project. The City Council passed a resolution in December to secure the remaining funds needed to complete the project.